



Newport News Police Department - Operational Manual

OPS-530 - EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS AND MESSAGES

Amends/Supersedes: OPS-530 (10/01/2007)

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I. PROCEDURES

A. Notifications

[55.2.6]

1. To ensure proper notification to the next of kin, it is the responsibility of all police employees to provide the department with updated emergency contact information.
 - a. Employees should utilize the self-service application of Munis, accessible through the Time and Leave system, to update information and respond to system prompts to review their existing information.
 - b. The employee module of the records management system (RMS) stores emergency contact information. To update this information employee will complete and submit NNPD [Form 77 Change of Status](#).

NOTE: Employees must update Munis and RMS separately. Information updated in one system does not automatically update in the other.

- c. Employees are encouraged to provide their supervisor with their current emergency contact information.
2. Incidents Involving Serious On-Duty Injury or Illness of Police Personnel
 - a. The investigating officer will notify their immediate supervisor and advise them of the circumstances, the employee's condition, and the hospital to which the employee was transported. [81.2.4(f)]
 - b. The immediate supervisor will respond to the scene or hospital, determine the seriousness of the injury or illness, and inform the next level of supervision in the chain of command, if necessary.
 - c. Next-of-kin notification
 - 1) The involved employee may make the notification if they are able and choose to do so.
 - 2) A supervisor will contact the involved employee's family to advise them of the incident and the post-incident procedures if the employee cannot make the notification or requests the supervisor to notify them. If the family member lives out of state or the supervisor cannot travel to their residence, the designated supervisor shall contact the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and arrange for personal notification to be made, as well as transportation, if needed. [22.2.4]

3. Incidents Involving On-Duty Death of Police Personnel

a. Departmental Notification

- 1) The first officer on the scene shall immediately notify the on-duty supervisor and the Communications Division. [81.2.4(f)]
- 2) The on-duty supervisor will respond to the scene and coordinate all necessary actions. [81.2.4(f)]
- 3) Per OPS-550 *Critical Incident Notification*, the Communications Division will coordinate the notifications with the ranking supervisor at the scene. Refer to the [Line of Duty Death Protocols](#).
- 4) Personal contact with the employee's next of kin shall be made whenever possible. If the individual to be contacted lives out of state or the supervisor cannot travel to their residence, the designated supervisor shall contact the law enforcement agency in that jurisdiction and arrange for personal notification and transportation if needed. [22.2.4]
- 5) The established procedure for notifying essential Department personnel will be initiated through the supervisor of the Communications Division.

NOTE: The executive staff will meet with the Chief of Police as soon as possible to assess and coordinate the specific needs of the employee's family, the department, and/or the community. [22.2.4]

- 6) The executive staff will be notified and ensure that all employees under their command are personally notified about the incident.

NOTE: It is important that as many Department employees as possible be personally notified so that they will not learn of the death through a source other than a Departmental representative.

b. Family Notification Guidelines

[22.2.4]

- 1) **Timeliness takes precedence over protocol in the death notification process.**
- 2) The ranking on-duty supervisor on the scene is responsible for ensuring that timely notification is made to the surviving family.
- 3) If possible, the Chief of Police and a police chaplain will accompany the notifying officer. However, if these persons are not readily available, notification should **not** be delayed until they gather. The surviving family should not hear about the death from any source other than a Departmental representative.
- 4) If the officer is still alive, but their death is imminent, every effort will be made to transport the family to the hospital without waiting for the appropriate delegation to gather.

- 5) If the family wants to go to the hospital, they should be transported via police vehicle. If they insist on personally driving, an officer should accompany them in the family car if they will allow it.
- 6) The senior ranking officer at the hospital shall be notified, preferably by telephone, that the family is en route to the hospital.
- 7) Every effort should be made to ensure the family's privacy during this traumatic time. Departmental employees should remember that the news media can monitor our radio frequencies. At no time will a Police Department employee mention the officer's name over the Departmental radio frequencies. Additionally, the officer's name should not be shared on personal social media accounts until the department releases it to the media or the family.

4. Citizens of the Community

- a. Before notifying the next-of-kin of a victim or seriously ill person who has been transported to the hospital, the officer will obtain accurate information concerning the person's name, address, nature, and extent of injuries or illness and the hospital to which the person was transported.
- b. The investigating officer will make every attempt to obtain the name and address of the person's next of kin.
- c. The investigating officer will try to contact the next-of-kin in person if notification concerns a death. Death notification by phone should be avoided.
 - 1) If the deceased is a resident of another city, the investigating officer will have a police representative from that city notified of all pertinent information and request that this representative notifies the next of kin in person.
 - 2) If the deceased is a military member, the investigating officer will notify the military contact number of the appropriate branch listed below and request that the military notify the next of kin. The investigating officer will advise the person at the contact number to ascertain the date, time, and name of the party making the notification for the completion of reports.
 - a) Fort Eustis - Military Police Desk (757) 878-4555
 - b) Langley AFB - Security Police Desk (757) 764-5092
 - c) Yorktown Naval Weapons Station - Security (757) 887-4939
 - d) U.S. Coast Guard Station Yorktown - Security (757) 856-2314
 - e) Newport News Shipbuilding Communications (757) 380-4031


NOTE: Newport News Shipbuilding Communications will notify their appropriate command personnel and have them contact the Police Department as soon as possible.

- d. If notification concerns a severe injury or illness, time is of the essence, and if expeditious notification warrants telephone contact rather than personal contact, then that method should be used.
- e. The above procedures apply when making notifications requested by other law enforcement or government entities.
- f. Officers will also refer to [OPS-425 Death Investigation](#), ensuring that all details regarding next-of-kin notifications are completed.

B. Emergency Messages

[81.2.11]

1. Department personnel may accept the following messages for delivery:
 - a. Death notifications
 - b. Family emergencies when all other means of contact have failed.
 - c. Checking the welfare of persons who cannot be contacted without an explanation.
 - d. Messages originating from or at the request of any other criminal justice agency.
 - e. Other emergency messages should be judged on their individual merits.
2. These guidelines allow wide latitude in the types of messages to be accepted and delivered by this department. All requests for police delivery of messages are expected to be handled with common sense and sound judgment.
3. The need for message delivery must always be weighed against the existing demand for higher-priority police services, which cannot be sacrificed for message delivery. In cases where the message delivery is delayed due to prioritization, the person calling should be apprised of the expected delay as in any other low-priority call for service.



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